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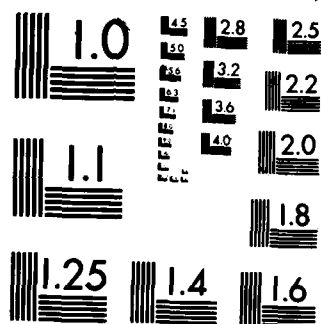
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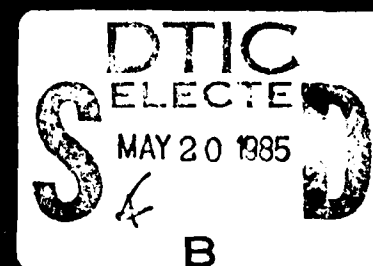
Organizational Behavior

The Race Relations Advisory Group:  
An Intergroup Intervention

Clayton P. Alderfer, Robert C. Tucker,  
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Working Paper # 67

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The Race Relations Advisory Group:  
An Intergroup Intervention<sup>\*</sup>

Clayton P. Alderfer

Robert C. Tucker

Charleen J. Alderfer

Leota M. Tucker

<sup>\*</sup>We thank Jack Gillette, Ed Mayhew, and David Thomas for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.

A race relations advisory group is a structural innovation within a formal organization to assist with the processes of eliminating racism and improving race relations among black and white managers. The group consists of approximately equal numbers of black and white organization members, balances membership by gender within race, and reflects a representative cross-section of hierarchical levels and functional departments. The group meets on a regular basis, receives assistance from a race-gender balanced consulting team, and participates in all major decisions and programs that affect race relations among members of the organization.

The group is created when an organization makes a major commitment to diagnose thoroughly and to change as indicated working relationships among black and white managers (Alderfer, Alderfer, Tucker, and Tucker, 1980).

This paper presents the theoretical basis for such a group, describes the four year developmental history of the group, and reports systematic data on the behavior and attitudes of the members.

#### Intergroup Theory for Changing Race Relations in Organizations

We show here how the end-states and change processes of a race relations advisory group derive directly from the constructs of intergroup theory (Alderfer, 1985).

A race relations advisory group is a group-in-an-organization. The members depend on one another to work on matters pertaining to race relations [of race relations] in the organization. The group is formally designated by the organization by a membership list and public records. Members have roles according to their races and genders and arising from tasks the group



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takes on. Representatives of the group negotiate with senior management, the personnel department, and the black managers association.

The advisory group itself is an organization group with the task of assisting in the management of relationships between two identity groups, blacks and whites. The permeability of the advisory group boundaries is decreased by membership lists and exact regular meeting times. The permeability of the group boundaries is increased by periodic turnover of members; by bringing spokespeople from the organization to make presentations and to receive information, and by having representatives of the groups speak to various units of the larger organization. Actions that both decrease and increase the permeability of the group's boundaries seek optimal boundary permeability for the group. The group deals directly with power differences between black and white groups by equating (or approximately equating) the numbers of black and white members. On racial matters, the group gives equal weight to black and white points of view, regardless of exact numbers of individual black and white members. The group is attentive to the affective patterns of its individual members, to the emotions that arise between subgroups of the total group, and to the feelings that occur when representatives of the advisory group relate to the organization as a whole. The group gives explicit attention to cognitive formations about role and mission. Of special significance is the point of view that the group develops about how matters affecting race relations will be conceived and communicated by the organization. Leadership behavior for the group is carried out primarily by the chairperson and secondarily by all members who perform specific tasks on behalf of the group.



Formation of the advisory group influences how the black-white relationship is embedded in the larger organization. Existence of an advisory group gives race relations a legitimate basis for discussion and action. Significant racial events are more likely to be noticed and unconscious processes are more likely to be made conscious.

The group recognizes that racism exists in society and in organizations and shows that the organization commits to eliminate the condition and improve race relations.

With approximately equal numbers of black men, black women, white men, and white women, the group is structured to support dialectical conflict between black and white members. Depending on the issues before the group, the dialectic may be between the black subgroup and the white subgroup or among the four race-gender subgroups. The whole group is a cross-race-and-gender unit for resolving differences among subgroups. The group may also form smaller cross-race-and-gender groups to complete specific tasks.

The group serves as an important element for dealing with resistance to changing race relations. As long as the group continues to exist, organization members have less capacity to deny the presence of racial dynamics. In the United States, the history of race relations shows cycles of regression followed by progression. At the core of these cycles is the deeply conflictual nature of the country's experience with race. The country espouses democratic principles. Yet the nation was originally founded on slavery for black people and still, after more than two hundred years of existence, struggles about whether blacks have the same voting rights as whites (Bennett, 1962). Because of the national historical pattern,

a person knowledgeable about race relations will expect resistive forces to arise whenever progressive movement occurs. An advisory group provides a legitimate public forum to identify and to work with resistance. As a result, a change program reduces the tendency to provoke backlash against progressive actions. Paradoxically, the groups serves as a force for stability in the midst of change because it provides an acceptable means for the examination of resistance.

The advisory group serves as the central arena for the operational of both absorptive and projective parallel processes. As a microcosm of the identity and organization groups in the organization, the advisory group absorbs the patterns of relations among those groups that is characteristic of the system represented. As a learning group committed to self examination and change, the advisory group projects alternative patterns of feeling, thinking, and behavior back into the larger organization. These processes occur dynamically over time, not at just one point in history. Absorptive parallel processes provide information for adapting the race relations improvement program to natural changes in the organization, and projective parallel processes provide the mechanism for adjusting the larger organization to the effects of improving race relations.

As stated, the theory provided concepts for designing the group, for understanding events on a session-by-session basis, and for intervening with group within a single meeting or between meetings. But the theory did not provide for a longer term developmental view. Change in race relations, afterall, takes place over an extended period. We turn now to an account of the life of a race relations advisory group over a five year period. The report provides extensive concrete detail about how one such group was conducted and offers a framework for understanding developmental phases.

### Developmental Phases of a Race Relations Advisory Group

The particular group was established to assist with implementing recommendations that evolved from a thorough diagnosis of race relations in management (Alderfer, Alderfer, Tucker, Tucker, 1980). A twelve person microcosm group balanced by race and gender and representative of corporate organization groups had assisted a four person race and gender balanced consulting team with the diagnosis. Meetings of the advisory group were chaired by the chief consultant who was white male. When the project moved from diagnosis to change, the size of the group was expanded to twenty members, and the chairperson became the corporate director of human resource management, who was a white male and had corporate responsibility for the change program. All members of the original group who wished to remain members were encouraged to do so. New members were recruited with explicit consciousness that the new group was to be helping to change the organization. Thus, members were selected because they were viewed as influential and represented major departments and hierarchical levels in the corporation.

Three members of the consulting team remained with the project after the work moved from diagnosis to implementation. The black female member, however, left the team and was replaced by a black female from the corporate organization development staff. The purpose of her leaving was to begin developing internal professional resources for the program. However, when the internal consultant was killed in automobile accident approximately a year after the change began, then the original black female member rejoined the consulting team. The consulting team worked with the chairperson between meetings to design the sessions and served as facilitator during the actual events. In the sessions, when the group was working in subgroups, the chairperson and consulting team met as a staff subgroup.

Membership on the group was voluntary and by invitation from the chairperson, who conferred informally with the consulting team and members of the group to identify potential members. The group as a whole also participated in the discussion of what type of member in terms of level, department, age, and racial orientation would be desirable whenever an opening on the group became available.

Attendance at meetings was carefully monitored, and when a pattern of missing meetings was observed, the person was asked to consider whether he or she wished to continue. Members also stepped forward to resign when their commitments changed to prohibit adequate attention to advisory group business. In this manner, membership on the group changed gradually over the course of the project. After eight years, nine of the twenty members of the advisory group were individuals who had been members of the original twelve person diagnostic group.

Advisory group meetings occurred approximately bi-monthly over the course of the project. Each meeting was uniquely designed. In the early phases the group's work was almost exclusively done during day long meetings with consultants present. In the later phases, project task forces were established to carry out specific assignments between total group meetings without consultants' present, and the group reduced its meetings to half days. Project task groups were virtually always balanced by race and gender. Eventually this manner of working became an unquestioned norm in the operation of the advisory group.

From the outset the group viewed itself as a learning group as well as a work unit. As we shall see, the group renegotiated its mission statement several times throughout its history, but at no time was there any question about omitting learning from the group's charter. This is a most important

element in the overall orientation to the change program. They would also be less likely to improve on others conditions that they themselves had not experienced and found to be of value. When the group projected its parallel processes into the organization, the effects were importantly shaped by what the group itself and the individual members had learned.

At various times throughout the course of the project, the question arose as to whether restricting the group's attention to matters of race was somehow an error. Whenever these issues arose the group retained its original focus. The basic reasoning had two parts. First, having a race relations advisory group did not prohibit other groups from forming to pursue their interests. Indeed, the presence of an effective race relations advisory group might be helpful to others. Second, if the group began to deal with other issues, there was a real danger that member's energies would become easily dissipated without being effective on any efforts. People were aware that one tactic employed by those who wished to interfere with efforts to improve race relations was to require people interested in race to take on all "human relations" problems. The result of retaining the group's central focus on race did stimulate other groups to form during this period (e.g., an Hispanic managers group) and did prevent other problems from impeding this group's efforts.

White people had important positions of authority in this project throughout the undertaking. The person who started the project from within the corporation was a white male, who in turn contacted a white male external consultant. The external consultant formed the four person cross race and gender team. Chair persons of the advisory group were all white. Three were men and one was a woman. In a predominantly white corporation, the

presence of white people in important roles gave the symbolic message that the program was race relations for black and white people, not "a social program" just for blacks. At the same time, the centrality of whites in the program ran the real risk that the net effect would be white domination. The crucial question was how to structure a balanced program that neither set up blacks to be rejected by the more powerful white majority, nor used the program as yet another vehicle to retain exclusively white dominance. The basic process used throughout the project was to be sure that black and white people in approximately equal numbers were present when key program decisions were being made and to be certain that different perspectives, if present, were respected.

From the outset, the race relations advisory group kept a documentary history of its activities. In the life of the group, the document was called the meeting minutes, although in practice the recording was far more extensive than one usually finds in most organization records. Depending on the length and intensity of the meetings, the minutes might range from 20 to 25 pages of double spaced type, not including appendices. The white male consultant was willing and interested in taking minutes. One person's doing so provided for continuity of scope and style. This method of working was talked through thoroughly among members of the consulting team and between the team and the advisory group for it, too, could have another relationship of potential white dominance. After each meeting the minutes were written and distributed to all group members for review. At the start of each subsequent session time was provided for group members to criticize and amend the minutes of the preceding meeting. During the review period, the scribe's behavior was simply to clarify and record

the comments of group members, which in turn appear in the subsequent meeting's minutes.

Whenever the group was discussing a topic in detail, the minutes became as close to a transcription of the events as the scribe could achieve. Except for the chairperson and consultants, who were identified by name, all other speakers were identified by race-gender group.

Sample dialogue appears below:

Charleen (consultant): Our feedback suggests that white people may not feel safe in the workshops.

BM (black male): Why don't whites feel safe anywhere -- even in their own groups?

WM (white male): I remember that blacks have fun in the workshop, and whites do not...

WF (white female): Individual whites may not have thought much about race.

BF (black female): Blacks tend to have more positive things on their lists than whites. Whites relate competitively to the subject of race.

WM: There was more camaraderie in the black group. I wanted to be in that group.

BF: It doesn't surprise me that blacks have an easier time.

WF: There may be no way for whites to get there sooner.

Clay (consultant): Yes, the consultants have been criticized for the suffering of the whites.

WM<sub>1</sub>: Yes, I criticized the consultants.

WM<sub>2</sub>: I remember I went through a denial syndrome. There was no other way.

BF: Blacks enjoy getting together. Whites are already together.

Jimmy (consultant): One does not learn if one is trying to protect oneself. For blacks, the workshop is personal and political. For whites, it is political. There is also the perception that the workshop is "for blacks."

The minutes served a variety of functions in addition to providing a rough written history of advisory group activities. With six to eight weeks between meetings, the minutes provided a means for group members to refresh their memories between events. The detail of the minutes helped to remind members of the diversity of views in the group and thereby, to keep the process of dialectical conflict alive. People who spoke openly in meetings had the reassurance that their contributions would be preserved without the personal hazard of their being held "individually" responsible for stating controversial opinions. Because the consultants managed the minutes and invited feedback every session, this mechanism provided a means for consistently giving attention to the relationship between the consulting team and the advisory group. Overall, the minutes provided a most important element in the overall conduct and understanding of the race relations advisory group.

The identification of notable phases in the life of the group over a five year period was made possible through a detailed review of the minutes from the entire period. Identification of phases turns on the complex interdependencies among the internal dynamics of the group, the products the group was creating, and the relationship of the group to the corporation as a whole (Gersick, 1983). More familiar developmental theories of groups are concerned only with the internal dynamics of the



group and were based mainly on all white male composition (Bennis and Shepard, 1956).

The internal dynamics of the group refer to the processes and structures the group used to work together. Included are defining the mission of the group; establishing the roles of chairperson, members and consultants; and developing a shared understanding of how black and white members of the group work together.

Throughout its life, the group produced or sponsored the creation of innovations for managing race relations in the corporation. In some instances they were alterations in organization structures and processes for dealing with racial matters. In other cases, the group produced a variety of written products.

As a microcosm group of the management of the organization, the advisory group had to be concerned with (1) how members represented their identity (race and gender) and organization (function and hierarchy) groups in the advisory group; and (2) how members represented the advisory group to their identity and organization groups.

We describe the phases of the group's life in terms of these three classes of variables: internal dynamics, products, and external relations. Both the relative weight and the qualitative content of these issues varies from phase to phase. Moreover, the notion of phases includes both the modes of sharp demarcation and of gradual transition. Sometimes changes in the group were marked by dramatic events signaling the presence of great tension. Other times the work was marked simply by gradual and persistent movement. Table 1 provides a summary of four phases in the life of the group.

Phase 1: Startup. The operation of the Race Relations Advisory Group for implementation of the change program began after the organization accepted the validity of the race relations diagnosis and committed itself to the recommendations that grew out of the diagnosis (Alderfer, Alderfer, Tucker, and Tucker, 1980).

During the startup phase, the advisory group expanded its membership, established a chairperson from the organization, and developed its norms of working together. All of these changes increased the boundary permeability of the group and ushered in a period of affective turmoil. The work of this period was to establish sound group boundaries, to formulate a clear mission for the group itself and in relation to the large organization, and to set the stage for the group to relate effectively to key elements in its wider organizational environment. Event of this period consisted of twelve day long meetings from May 1980 to May 1981.

Looking inward, the first step in this process was to formulate a succinct mission statement for the group and to reach agreement about the duties of members, the chairperson, and the consultants. The process was begun by the chairperson bringing a draft mission statement along with position description for members, consultants, and chairperson to the first meeting. The chairperson's role initially consisted of managing advisory group meetings and receiving input from the group. The member's role originally involved representing oneself, acting as advisor, and implementing program designs. The group proposed modifying the chairperson's role to include reporting back to the group regarding the consequences of their recommendations and enlarging the member's role to include bringing information from the organization to the group and from the group

to the organization. Group members also expanded their own and the chairperson's role definitions to enlarge the nature of learning all would undertake.

In addition, the consultants interviewed members by race-gender groups to identify their hopes and fears about the project. Results of those interviews categorized by race-gender subgroup were presented to the advisory group as a whole. These data recognized the similarities and differences about improving race relations that black and white members brought to the advisory group. Both racial groups hoped for better understanding of the races and wanted the group to be a positive force for active change. White members, however, represented concerns from white managers. From white men, there was the question of "double standards" for the promotion of blacks. From white women, there was concern over why the Black Managers Association was allowed to exist. Blacks were forceful in wondering whether channels for upward mobility for blacks would become more open. Whites expressed uncertainty about whether group meetings would be too comfortable or too uncomfortable and whether the group's work would turn out just to be an "academic exercise."

In short, both organization group and identity group issues were alive for advisory group members from the outset. The effects of advisory group members negotiating with the chairperson was for all to become more committed to learning at an individual level and for everyone to become more conscious of the two-way relationship between the group and the organization in which it was embedded. Examining expectations about the group by race-gender groups gave legitimacy to the major subgroups, identified areas of agreement, and pointed to likely sources of conflict between black and white members. This process put the methods of dialectical conflict to work from the outset of the group.

In the early sessions, black-white tension in the advisory group turned on the relative weight to be given to "power versus education" in effecting change in race relations. The simplified version of the conflict had blacks favoring power methods and whites preferring education. However, at a deeper level, both racial groups knew that either orientation alone would be less effective -- perhaps even counter-productive -- than the two in combination. At an intellectual level, the question was what mix of power and education would bring about the desired results. However, at an emotional level, the question was what kind of relationship would emerge between black and white members of the group. Indeed, there was an unstated concern about whether the group would stay together as a force for changing race relations.

Two important products emerged from the startup phase of the advisory group. The first was a non-technical summary of the race relations diagnosis, written by members of the corporate communications department in consultation with the race relations advisory group. The second was a statement on race relations competence as an element of overall managerial effectiveness, prepared by the advisory group with the assistance of the consulting team. Both of these documents reflected a commitment by blacks and whites to work together in order to improve race relations. Both, too, were designed to provide explicit recognition of black and white differences in how to pursue this goal and what indicators of progress would be. The diagnosis summary looked backward toward the diagnosis undertaken by a team of outsiders and brought that analysis into the organization in a language and mode suitable to its members. The competence statement looked forward by establishing a set of concrete indicators of race relations competence as defined by current members of the corporation.

Preparing the diagnosis summary was a strenuous and difficult undertaking. The communications department writer was a white male who believed that he understood race relations and who faced a group that treasured their newly discovered racial group autonomy. Frequently, the writer's efforts were criticized and returned for modification by the advisory group. Eventually the white writer accepted the idea that his assignment would become easier if he had a black partner. He enlisted the aid of a black male from his department, and together the two finished the work to the satisfaction of the advisory group. Even though the final product was viewed most favorably by all involved, the emotional costs of his exchanges with the advisory group were carried for years afterward by the white writer. Four years after the diagnosis document was completed, he was cautioning colleagues to be wary of the difficulties involved in working with the advisory group.

A special feature of the diagnosis summary was that it presented the same "facts" simultaneously from both black and white perspectives. Thus, not only the words conveyed the idea that blacks and whites had different perceptions about race relations in the corporation, but the presentation also demonstrated that these differences had unique meanings for the separate racial groups. Below are quotations from the report.

. . .

### Status of Race Relations

#### Black Perspective

According to black managers numbers are not enough. Meeting affirmative action goals doesn't ensure that blacks will have the chance to compete equally with whites. Black managers believe that getting a good job, or winning a promotion by working twice as hard and waiting twice as long, doesn't guarantee success. ...Ninety-nine percent of black managers agree that race relations at the company could be improved, and only half would characterize race relations as "good."

#### White Perspective

It is sometimes hard for whites to understand what all the fuss is about. A high percentage of whites believe that race relations in the corporation are good, and that the company has been responsive to black needs while just over 80 percent agree that there is room for improvement, as many think there has been improvement since they joined the company...

### Informal Black/White Relations

#### Black Perspective

Black managers believe that blacks and whites tend to stay with their own kind and think that good one-to-one relationships are rare in the corporation. For black managers, that distance doesn't result just in a lack of friendship, it means that crucial information, usually shared informally, is not available. In addition, about 75 percent believe that white managers are uncomfortable with competent blacks...

#### White Perspective

Most whites (about 75 percent) believe that good white-black relations are common at the company, and about half report having had serious conversations about race relations with blacks. However, white managers agree that whites and blacks tend to socialize with members of their own race, but only 10 percent agree with the statement that white managers are uncomfortable with competent blacks...

The struggles in the production of the diagnosis summary reflect the operation of a variety of forces including an early stage in the life of the group and the strain inside group on racial matters. During this phase, white men in particular were subject to special scrutiny by other subgroups in the advisory group. These processes touched the consulting team, the white men in the advisory group, and the communications department writer. At stake was the question of what kind of power and authority blacks would

have in implementing the race relations improvement program. Would whites, directly or subtly, act as if they alone were in charge? Would blacks be able to exercise significant and sustained influence in the change program? During this period whites had the task of learning about their own blindness on these matters, and blacks had to determine whether they could help to fashion structures that solidly reflected joint influence processes. Shaping the diagnosis summary indicated that both racial groups could be acceptably represented, although not without strain and tension.

Writing the race relations competence document was truly a group undertaking. In doing this task, the group showed it could be creative because all material in the paper came from group members. The process was tedious and stressful. Starting in race-gender alike subgroups, the members produced statements they thought were characteristic of managers who were "high performers" on matters of race. The conflict between education and power strategies was dealt with in a variety of ways: by acknowledging it in the preface of the document, by defining competence in terms of both understanding (i.e., education) and behavior (i.e., power), and by providing extensive lists of "understandings" and "behaviors" that were to be expected of corporate managers, who aspired to race relations competence. Throughout the period of document creation the consulting team performed a variety of roles. Between meetings they edited and organized the group products. Within sessions they devised a series of work activities -- sometimes in race-gender alike subgroups and sometimes in cross race groups -- to preserve the clarity of the separate racial perspectives and to forge a wholistic document. During this period the consultants also prepared a series of lectures, which

offered a conceptual orientation to how the members were working and what they were producing. Ultimately, it turned out that this period of experimentation and learning was setting the stage for the Race Relations Workshop. Many of the activities invented to help the group work through the formulation of the competence document became elements of the structure eventually used to provide learning about race relations competence.

In final form, the race relations competence document consisted of seventeen pages of double spaced type. There were four major sections defined by classes of supervisory relationships: blacks supervising whites, whites supervising blacks, whites supervising whites, and blacks supervising blacks. Each section included a series of "understandings" and a series of "behaviors" applicable to the class of supervisory relationship. Table 2 contains excerpts from the race relations competence document.

Approximately half way through the startup phase, at the beginning of the fifth meeting, the advisory group offered its first strenuous criticism of the minutes as prepared by the white male consultant. The content of the criticism covered a variety of dimensions: that the minutes had inaccurately reported the words of a white male and a black female who had disagreed about the nature of racism; that a significant interpretation pertaining to the power versus education dispute had been left out; that a commitment by the consultants to circulate a document in advance of the next meeting had neither been kept nor recorded accurately; and that reports of certain aspects of the group's work where the consultant had been present were more detailed than elements where



he had to rely on the reports of others. In this session, the members also revisited their statement of roles and responsibilities. This time the role of the consultants was renegotiated in a manner that directly paralleled changes that had been made in the chairperson's role during an earlier meeting. These confrontations signaled that the members were addressing their issues of authority with the outside experts as well as with their internal chain of command. Feelings that might otherwise have interfered with the tasks of the group became available for work. The competence document presents the cognitive formations of a group that had looked directly at its own racial issues and was coming to terms with ambiguity of its own authority in the corporation.

While this cognitive work was taking place inside the advisory group, plans were also underway to establish a new upward mobility program for the corporation. The objective of the program was to alter the barriers in the corporation that interfered with qualified black employees being promoted to middle and upper levels of the corporation. The upward mobility program represented a very major intervention into the corporation. Many groups in the system in addition to the advisory group had vested interests in how promotion decisions were made. These included the top officers of the corporation, the personnel committee of the Board of Directors, the existing management personnel committee system, and the Black Managers Association. The burden of negotiating with these groups fell to the chairman of the advisory group. Each of these groups had its own perspective on the proposed program, and, in some instances, it was literally impossible to meet the concerns of one group without frustrating those of another group. Take two questions: Should there be a special program at all? Should it

be a cross racial program (i.e., for whites and blacks) or for blacks only? The existing personnel committee system viewed the idea of a special program as a sign that they were not doing their work, and asked for an opportunity to improve on their past record of promoting few blacks. In a letter distributed to the group, the Black Managers Association was a strong advocate for a black-only program with defined percentages of promotions. The question of the racial composition of the program was a source of debate in most groups consulted about the program. The advisory group ultimately recommended in favor of a black-only program. The consulting team, on the other hand, favored a mixed racial design, as did the chair. Virtually all corporate groups who were consulted on the question expressed concern about the whites who would not be chosen, if there was a mixed racial program. Thus some white managers outside the advisory group strongly favored a black-only program. In the end, the decision to have a mixed program was made by senior management. Those who favored a cross racial program had a variety of reasons for their views. A black-only program had the flavor of a social program for blacks, not an intervention for the entire corporation. Such a program would then be vulnerable to charges of reverse discrimination and subject to undermining as a second class venture. Moreover, the whole corporation needed to improve its corps of managerial talent -- including identification, selection, and development. Building racial consciousness into a management development program for the entire corporation served the interests of the several groups (not just blacks) and addressed a number of problems faced by the corporation (not just race relations).

The corporate picture was additionally complicated by the fact that the corporation had determined that it had an excess of managers and was

in the process of reducing its management force. How do you institute a special program designed to insure more rapid promotion of some people, while others were being invited to retire early?

The last element in Phase I of the Advisory Group work was making a presentation to the Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors. A team led by the chairperson and consisting of two group members (a black female and a black male) and the white female member of the consulting team made an extended report to the board committee. Covered in this meeting were the diagnostic study results by the white female consultant, the background and operations of the advisory group by the black female group member, the development and use of the race relations competence document by the black male group member, and the upward mobility program by the chairperson. The team asked the committee to approve a policy making race relations competence an element of management competence for the corporation.

When they returned to the advisory group, the team reported that the board committee had greeted them warmly and enthusiastically. The board, however, had not been willing to approve the concept of race relations competence as policy. Instead they "endorsed" and "encouraged" the group's efforts. Advisory group members were troubled by what they perceived as equivocal support for the concept of race relations competence. But perhaps more importantly, they were disturbed by the fact that the team -- and especially the chairperson -- had proposed a mixed race upward mobility program, after the advisory group made it very clear that it favored a black-only program. Considerable time at the advisory group meeting after the board presentation was spent discussing the group's reactions to the team's work with the board. On balance, people viewed the event

as decidedly mixed. They appreciated the interest and enthusiasm of the board committee, and they recognized that they had not received the clear and definite support they had sought.

Phase 2: Major Intervention. The next period in the life of the advisory group consisted of five meetings between September 1981 and December 1982 and was marked by a notable change in the nature of group's work. During the period between May and September 1981, the consultants were asked to prepare a design for a three day workshop to provide corporate managers with an opportunity to learn race relations competence. The activities of phase II were focussed on the advisory group's providing assistance with the design and implementation of the two major interventions -- the upward mobility program and the race relations competence workshop. This second period in the life of the group, therefore, was marked by the group's reacting to initiatives whose origin was outside themselves. Instead of providing a means to harness the perspectives and energy of group members as they literally wrote the competence document, this period called for their critical skills. As work moved outside of the group and into the organization itself, members had an opportunity to experience the direct effects of attempting to bring about change.

The two major interventions directly paralleled the power and education emphases called for by the competence document. The upward mobility program was aimed directly to influence promotion policy and practice, a subject at the center of corporate power. The workshop, on the other hand, was first and foremost an educational intervention designed to provide learning opportunities. But, of course, each program had elements of both education and power. The upward mobility was in part a method for teaching the

organization how to improve the fairness of its promotional system, and the workshop was populated by the most senior managers and others who served on the corporation's personnel committees.

The primary innovation of the upward mobility program was to select people with the aid of an eight person task force balanced by race and gender that worked independently of and in cooperation with the existing personnel committee system. This task force initially accepted information from the existing personnel system to determine who should be considered for the program. Later their data were supplemented by information collected by set of outside interviewers also balanced by race and gender, who spoke with a candidate, a candidate's boss, a referral person named by the candidate, and a referral person named by the supervisor. Interviewers coded their data according to a pre-existing numerical system and returned the information to the corporate task force. This group made an initial determination about who should be selected, who should be rejected, and who might be selected based upon further deliberations. Final selections were then made by the departmental personnel committees. There was also provision for an appeals committee consisting of four senior managers who were willing to hear the requests of individuals who believed their personnel records justified their being considered for the program. This basic design was rooted in the method of dialectical conflict and parallel processes. Unlike the normal personnel committees, the special task force was balanced by race and gender. It offered the normal system a selection process that was not so heavily weighted by white male perspectives. Some members of the task force were also members of the advisory group, so in the case of those individuals there was a direct transfer of advisory group

learning and processes into the task force. The task force, in turn was in a dialectical relationship to the department personnel committees.

In the case of the upward mobility program, the advisory group's role was to give their views of the detailed design. This process was shaped in part by the fact that some advisory group members were also candidates for the program. The process of review involved two steps. The first consisted of the group as a whole raising questions about the overall design, and the second involved breaking the group into race alike subgroups so that both black and white perspectives on the program could be identified clearly. Members of the advisory group raised no questions about the basic design of the program, although they had many questions about specific details. For example: from the total group came the question of how the special task force members would be selected. From the white group came a request to be sure that feedback was sensitively delivered to people who were not selected. From the black group came the observation that the special task force should not be used as a justification for the corporation's failing to increase the number of black managers on the normal personnel committees.

The race relations competence workshop was designed to help managers learn the knowledge and behavior defined by the competence document that had been written by the advisory group. Preparing the competence document, of course, set the parameters for the content of the workshop. It also turned out that several of the lectures and exercises that had been developed to help the advisory group work together effectively in its early stage also found their way into the workshop design. Finally, a large proportion of advisory group members were participants in the first workshop. In the case

of the workshop, the consultants did not tell the group about the design in advance of their attending. Instead, advisory group members were invited to attend, and the next meeting was devoted to their reporting their experience and criticism to the consulting team.

Lasting three days and organized to accomodate approximately 42 people, the workshop had several modes of learning. Four lectures provided conceptual material on thinking-feeling, racism, role-playing, and change processes in organizations. With a black-white participant ratio of approximately 1:2, workshop members carried out semi-structured and unstructured activities in race-alike and cross race discussion groups. Generally the race-alike activities took place during the first half of the workshop, and the cross race work in the second half. The final stream of learning was built on a series of role playing exercises that derived directly from the race-alike and cross race sections of the competence document.

The advisory group generally had a favorable reaction to the workshop's first run, and they also had some pointed and strongly felt comments. Questions about the balance of race-alike and cross race time were raised by both black and white participants, but their emphases were somewhat different. Whites wanted more time in mixed race groups, and there was talk of the desirability of more "T group time," so people would leave the workshop feeling better than they apparently did. Some whites expressed concern over the number of whites who left the workshop feeling depressed. Blacks, on the other hand, expressed a desire for more race-alike time in order to have more time to talk together about how to deal with whites. There were also a variety of critical comments directed toward consulting

team. People observed that the two male consultants seemed notably more active than the females, and that the male consultants seemed competitive with one another. People noted that the consultants were not as fully coordinated as they might ideally be, and they did not provide participants with adequate opportunity to give feedback during the workshop. All of these comments and others like them reflect natural problems in the development of a new and complex undertaking. In subsequent editions of the workshop, the consultants were able to adjust the design in ways that met many of the advisory group criticisms. This was especially true on matters pertaining to how the consultants carried out their roles and relationships. It was less possible to make changes that satisfied white and black requests for more race alike time and more cross race time. The most notable aspect of the advisory group's reaction to the first edition of the workshop was the thoroughness and frankness with which they offered their comments. The people were committed and involved enough to look for and find problematic features of the program, and they felt strongly enough and free enough, for the most part, to speak their views directly to the consulting team.

Another episode pertaining to the relationship of the workshop and the organization arose during this period. A black male manager, known to have a promising future in the corporation, found a memorandum declaring "open season on porch monkeys" on his desk. Obviously well-written, the document said that the prey were also known as "jigoboos, saucerlips, jungle bunnies, spooks, and spear chuckers" and could be spotted by looking for "bright colors, Cadillacs, empty wine bottles, and hookers." Readers were encouraged to hunt and kill the identified species. The receiver of



of the memorandum brought it to the black male consultant, who in turn discussed it with the entire consulting team. The group decided to bring it to the advisory group. In extensive and sometimes heated discussion, the group entertained two options: (1) Ask that the president of the corporation write a letter to all managers condemning the paper. (2) Make the document an item of discussion in the race relations workshop. Differences in views on this matter were sharp and did not split along racial lines. In the end, the consultants decided to make it part of the lecture on racism. The article would be handed out as a specimen and collected after participants had an opportunity to read and discuss it. Asking the president to write about the incident would give it widespread notoriety and no opportunity for people to discuss and reflect upon their reactions in a supervised setting. In the context of the workshop the document provided an example of virulent racism from the corporation itself. Eventually we learned that the material had been entered into the corporation's computer, and ultimately, was available only to people privy to the appropriate code word. These facts indicated that the paper was not the product of a single "sick mind" as some people initially thought but rather the product of collective efforts.

Other indications during this phase of the group's life, however, were also suggestive of impending difficulties. For the first time, advisory group meetings were canceled by the chairperson without thorough explanation. Manifestly, the reasons had to do with excessive workload. A lot was going on outside meetings in connection with the upward mobility program and the workshops. Some advisory group members were active in both programs. Inwardly, however, there were other suggestions of

trouble. Members expressed a need to review the group's "accomplishments to date," and to develop systematic ways of having old members leave and new members join the group. These feelings of impending change, too, were quite natural for a group who had worked strenuously for nearly eighteen months on a controversial intervention program. At the time, there was a sense of euphoria about the group; real change seemed about to occur. Events that, in retrospect, were harbingers of more serious problems in the future were not interpreted as such at the time. Schooled in the theory of progressive and regressive cycles in changing race relations, the consultants among themselves were heard to ask, "Where is the resistance? This is too good to be true. What are we missing?" Of course, the signs were there. We, however, needed the perspective of time to interpret them completely.

A final important element during this phase was that the black male consultant joined the organization as a member of upper management in the personnel department. This was a conflictual choice for both the individual and for the team, because, as a general rule, we hold to the principle that outside consultants do not become members of organizations after they have been consultants to them. But, in this instance, we agreed to violate the principle because the change seemed to be good for the individual and for the program. After the decision was made, the advisory group received the news and was offered an opportunity to discuss it. They responded with friendly banter, and, uncharacteristically, did not take the opportunity to explore or comment on the matter in depth.

Phase 3: Crisis and Realignment. The third period in the life of the advisory group consisted of five meetings between January 1983 and December 1983. During the time between May 1982 and August 1983, the interviewing program to select people for the upward mobility program had been undertaken, and the special task force to choose candidates had been put into place. By the end of the calendar year 1982, the organization -- and especially the chairperson of the advisory group -- were feeling the effects of the organization's resistance to the upward mobility program. At the close of the last advisory group meeting of 1982, which occurred in March, the chairperson had members indicate whether they wished to continue with the group. Six members (30%) of the group indicated a desire to leave. The race gender distribution of the departing subgroup was one white female, two black females, two black men, and one white man. When meetings of the advisory group from April to December 1982 were cancelled, the chairperson asked again in September 1982 for the people to indicate whether they wished to stay or leave the group. This time only five members indicated a desire to leave. So when the advisory group met again in January 1983, after a hiatus of more than nine months, the group had a contingent of five new members: one white female, two black females, one black male, and one white male. The cancellation of meetings and the turnover of members turned out, in retrospect, to be a signal that the entire race relations program was entering a period of stress and turmoil.

The first meeting of this phase was devoted to assessment and appraisal of the program to date. Bringing five new people into the group

became an occasion for members to examine the benefits and costs of membership. The design called for this to be done in race-gender alike groups. Each subgroup met by itself and made lists of benefits and costs. As it turned out, a simple count of the items on these lists showed that the white men alone had a longer list of costs than of benefits, the other three subgroups showed more benefits than costs. Nevertheless, the overall pattern was one of marked ambivalence for all subgroups. No such group, except possibly the white women, showed a clear preponderance of benefits over costs. Table 3 provides a tabulation of benefits and costs for each subgroup. All of the subgroups independently identified several common themes. Among the benefits were increased self-awareness and learning and an opportunity to contribute actively to programs that seemed as if they were going to work. Among the costs were frustration and emotional tension and a sense every small bit of change took so long to achieve. The white male chairperson of the group independently made his own list, which consisted of 5 benefits and 5 costs. His list alone contained the notion that he felt estranged from both black and white groups.

In the discussion that followed posting of the lists, an item on the white males list turned out to be of concern for all four subgroups. The white men had written "concern whether the primary goal is improved race relations versus grants or published books and articles." Members revealed that they had a variety of perceptions and reactions. A white woman said, "From my point of view, fine popularize it. Get more grants." A white man commented, "When we put that on the board, I think it represents frustrations. Grants have been given, but race relations have not advanced. The upward mobility program is an accomplishment."

Expressing these concerns openly in the advisory group allowed the members to proceed fruitfully to other dimensions of assessing the overall race relations program. But concerns about the motives of the consultants were not to go away for sometime. In retrospect, the challenge to the consultants and the struggles of the white male members of the advisory group were elements of a larger pattern. The race relations improvement program was beginning to provide a real stimulus for change to the organization -- principally through the workshop and the upward mobility program -- and the people associated with that change were beginning to feel the organization push back. The resistance that our theory had long predicted, and which we had seen only in moderate doses, was now in full bloom.

The remainder of the meeting was given to reports and discussion of other program features. A report on the upward mobility program indicated that an initial cohort of 32 people had been selected for the program, that special training for these people had already begun, that six had already been promoted, and that the data for selecting the second cohort were already being analyzed. The process of selecting the second cohort, which was to be much larger than the first, was turning out to be more complex than originally expected. Another report indicated that the corporation's program for labor management cooperation was being changed to include more black participants and to address racial issues in the non-management workforce. A report on the race relations workshop described the design changes made in response to the advisory group's feedback, identified the different reactions to the workshop from blacks and whites, and explained the strong effects on the workshop from the stance taken by senior corporate officials. When senior managers related to the workshop in a receptive manner, others

followed their lead. When the high ranking people acted resistively, that also was associated with similar reactions from lower ranking participants. The report also noted that the white male consultant was the least popular among the team, that blacks liked the race alike portions of the workshop, and that whites disliked race alike activities and preferred to operate in cross-race exercises. Other reports touched on remaining aspects of the intervention program, including the corporate information program, the changes of race-gender composition of personnel committees, the status of the appraisal system review, and consequences of revising the corporation's discrimination complaint system.

A final aspect of this first meeting of the transitional phase was a beginning of change in the operating structure of the advisory group. Until this point the group had largely done its work during the day or half-day long meetings when all the members gathered together. Now, at the initiative of the chairperson, the group began to consider a new structure. From the reports about on-going elements of the race relations program, members identified tasks that needed group attention. Volunteers from the group while attending to the race gender balance of their members, attached themselves to the various tasks and agreed to do work between regular sessions of the advisory group. This change brought the possibility for more initiative back to members of the group, kept the group as a whole as a setting for monitoring and discussing, and ultimately, reduced the time required for the total group meetings. But, as we shall see, the new structure did not "take" instantly. Adjustments in the overall pattern of authority for the chairperson were necessary before the new structure of the group began to work effectively.

By the next meeting in this phase of the program, the full force of corporate changes was to be felt by the race relations advisory group. Amidst the extensive changes being sought through the race relations improvement program, the corporation itself was undergoing two most significant alterations. Senior leadership was changing. During this period, the president and all of the senior vice presidents were to leave. An entire cohort of managers moved into retirement, and their successors took on new jobs. Also associated with the change in leadership in the corporation was the development of a new corporate mission. The organization was to open up an entirely new lines of business in highly competitive markets. One effect on the race program was a new level of cost consciousness, as the organization aimed to control and reduce all unnecessary expenses.

By the next advisory group meeting, the effects of these changes on the group's work began to be experienced directly. A new corporate vice president of personnel was named; the chairperson of the advisory group was reassigned to a position of planning for the new ventures; and the new personnel vice president was also named chairperson of the advisory group. Thus, the group got a new person as chair whose corporate rank was higher than his predecessor. Along with the change in the group's leadership came turnover in the consulting team. The black members of the team left the roles of consultants -- the black female to separate from the implementation phase of the project entirely and the black male to take a new higher ranking position in the organization, which made him project manager rather than consultant. These adjustments called for replacing the black members of the consulting team and set off a search process that was to take approximately six months to complete.

Needless to say, all of these changes heightened the uncertainty of an advisory group that was already nervous from the resistance it was carrying from the results of its own interventions. The question naturally arose: was this period of corporate transition to be a time for ending the race relations program? Outside the group meetings, conversations among the consultants and the new personnel leadership addressed the questions that had been raised about the consultants' motivation and commitments. At one point, a talk between the white male consultant and the corporation's chief executive examined the questions that had arisen and reaffirmed their separate commitments to the work. At a subsequent advisory committee meeting an additional report on the research program was made, and group members seemed satisfied that their concerns had been adequately addressed.

During this period of turmoil, evidence also came forward to suggest the operation in the corporation of a group of white people specifically dedicated to preventing the promotion of black men and women. The group had an acronym, a departmental location, and a hypothetical list of members. Initially, members of the advisory group attempted to determine the membership and activities of this group through informal conversations with people in the department where it was located. These efforts produced no unequivocal data, and after discussions among senior managers in the operating department and the personnel department, the task was turned over to the corporate security group. They obtained evidence that resulted in disciplinary action being taken in relation to the white man who was at the head of the white supremacist group.

Meanwhile the advisory group continued to review its mode of operation and the various project elements. The new corporate vice president and



chairperson, who had been one of the five new members of the group, acknowledged his need to learn more about race, encouraged members to stay with the group and keep the project moving, and pledged his own commitment and support. Outside of the group meetings, the new chairperson worked strenuously to keep the upward mobility program from being derailed. Inside the group, he asked the group to continue to review carefully the various program elements and the progress or lack thereof that had been made on each one. During this period the consultants prepared a brief historical outline of the advisory group activities over the three years of its life, completed an analysis of quantitative data that had been taken from the group, and presented this material to the group in order to assist with the self review and to help in the process of teaching new members (including the chairman) about the group's efforts and accomplishments. Initially, group members were skeptical about these efforts, and their feelings were heightened when the new vice president unexpectedly had to miss an advisory group meeting in order to take part in corporate level labor negotiations. Eventually, however, members accepted the soundness of the new leadership.

Another issue that arose during this period was the role of race relations in the new corporate ventures. Group members observed that planning for these new corporate ventures had included no black managers, that few blacks were employed in the new enterprises, and that virtually all blacks who were operating in the new departments were doing so at comparatively low levels in the hierarchy. The response to these observations by those in charge of the new ventures was that the pressures of startup prohibited careful attention to race relations;

the omission of blacks from significant roles in the new ventures was an oversight, not intentional. The fact that this omission occurred and was so visible, first to the advisory group and then to senior managers, served as a powerful signal to all. Unless conscious efforts were made to include race relations considerations in transition planning, the natural forces of a white dominated system would simply reproduce themselves and result in the exclusion of blacks.

While the advisory group was grappling with its own transition and leadership succession, the task force structure was put into place and began to work, albeit with some fits and starts. Cross race and gender subgroups met between sessions of the total group, carried out assignments, and reported to the total group. During this period, attention was given to the white supremacist group, the race relations workshop, the effects of the upward mobility program on people not selected for inclusion, and the statement of the corporation's equal employment opportunity policy. On the latter issue, the group had noticed that the corporation had a policy of disciplinary action against employees who practiced sexual harrassment, but there was no comparable sanction for racial harrassment. A task force rewrote the appropriate section of the corporate personnel handbook to correct this inconsistency.

When the new chairperson missed what would have been his second meeting of the group, members used the occasion of his absence to formulate the questions they had about his own and the corporation's commitment to the race program. They asked that he respond to the reports that had been made by the task forces in his absence and that he tell the group "where he was coming from" on matters pertaining the race program. At the next advisory group meeting, the man did exactly that. He affirmed the corpora-

tion's commitment to improved race relations, explained that some "one-time only" adjustments related to the corporate mission had pulled energy away from the program, and stated that after labor relations the largest portion of his energy was devoted toward making the upward mobility program work effectively. At this time, the group again discussed the situation with regard to white men. The chairman confirmed the need to add two white men to the group. Within the group, people observed that the group pressures toward uniformity of views about race relations may have stifled some white men's willingness to speak up and offer opinions that differed from the majority of the group. The new chairman indicated that he hoped people would increase their risk-taking and trust in the group.

The group also, once again, revised its core mission statement to include the facts that it now reported to the Vice President for Personnel; that questions of harrassment of employees came within the domain of the group; and that the group was expected to take initiatives to improve race relations, not merely respond to requests for advice.

As the group's mission and mandate seem to become stable once more, energy became available for other facets of the race relations improvement program. The group performed a review of the internal complaint procedure. They also returned to a subject that had previously been treated most ambivalently in the past: a corporate-wide information program about race relations improvement in the corporation. Previous efforts to undertake such a program had stalled. The group had angered staff members from corporate communications when they worked on the diagnosis summary. The task force on the information program had had great difficulty in establishing meeting times. And whenever the subject of whether to have such a

program arose in the group, the members seemed to speak in many voices. Now, however, the group seemed to have reached a point in its own development where the subject could again be examined thoroughly.

The method for conducting this inquiry in the advisory group consisted of asking the two race alike groups to meet independently; to give their views on the advantages, disadvantages, and objectives of such a program; and to report this material to the total group. The reports showed that the black group identified many more advantages than disadvantages (8 to 4), while the whites identified the same number of advantages as disadvantages. In the total advisory group discussion, the members agreed that a corporate-wide information program should be undertaken. Four key directions were identified as the central core of this effort: (1) to recognize that racism exists, (2) to understand that it will not be tolerated; (3) to create a desire to change it; and (4) to eliminate racism wherever it exists within the corporation. This new resolve seemed to indicate an end to the period of crisis and transition in the advisory group. The fact remained, however, that the new vice president turned out to be in his position on an interim basis. At their next meeting, the advisory group was to have a new chairperson.

Phase 4: Stabilization. The fourth period in the life of the advisory group began in March 1984, includes five meetings, and continues to the present time. The key events signaling stabilization were the selection of a new (and permanent) vice president for personnel and the decision by the former chairperson to stay with the group as a member. The permanent chairperson was a white woman who had been a member from the outset, knew the full history of the group, and was familiar with its way of working.

Together with her predecessor, the two vice presidents provided the group with a new degree of active organizational authority. During this period the group continued to review key elements of the change program, developed two new projects for itself, and solidified the pattern of operating between meetings with race-gender balanced task forces.

At the start of this phase, the consulting team was reconstructed after the search for two new black members was completed. The search had been most difficult in terms of finding a black female who had the necessary qualifications and was available in the near-by geographic area. Members of the original team planned to stay together to complete writing about the project and thus planned to maintain their relationships with one another. Both the new consultants and the organization were alerted to the fact that the time frame for external consultants retaining a major role was limited. In late 1983 when the new consultants were being employed, all parties talked about a two-to-three year time span until the consultants left the project. Setting "an end" to consultant involvement with the project was a development that consciously originated with the consulting team and evolved from two basic considerations. First, there was a sense that some of the unconscious resistance that emerged during the third phase was rooted in a fear by senior managers that the consultants did not have a sense of when the relationship should end and therefore had to be driven out. Since these messages, which were never stated explicitly, came from senior white men who had been consistently supportive of the work, they had to be taken seriously. Second, there was a sense from the

consultants that their work should end within a finite period. Full-fledged systemic resistance to the work had emerged. It had been worked on thoroughly by the advisory group and the larger organization. The project emerged in a strengthened condition. Establishing a period for ending also told the organization that in the foreseeable future they would have full responsibility for the program. In the meantime, the task would be to establish the structures and processes for the organization to carry on effectively without external consultants.

Reports on the status of the upward mobility program and the race relations workshop continued to occupy the attention of the advisory group. At the beginning of this phase, a representative from the personnel department provided a statistical account of the progress of the first cohort and indicated that a second cohort -- more than twice the number of the first -- had been selected for the second phase of the program. This development represented the results of great efforts by senior black and white members of the personnel department and signalled a resolution of the most strenuous resistance that had emerged in phase 3. Crucial elements in this resolution included enhanced influence by department personnel committees, increased overall size of the program, and addition of several white managers to the second cohort. The advent of new members of the consulting team also became the occasion for reviewing and revising the design of the race relations workshop. From the outset, white participants had objected to the amount of time they had to spend in race alike groups. Initially, the original consulting team had responded to these comments by increasing the amount of time for cross race discussions at the end of the workshop. Now the new team also found a method for slightly

increasing the time available for cross race discussions during the first day of the workshop. Both kinds of changes implemented during this period -- the alterations in the upward mobility program achieved by organization members and the workshop design adjustments brought about by the consultants -- represented movements in response to criticisms voiced by white organization members. They reflected the operation of dialectical conflict and were negotiated with strong participation by black and white people.

During this period, participation by non-management people in the race relations competence workshop was also increased. In one episode, ten members of the union leadership participated with managers in the ongoing design. In a latter case, workshop materials were substantially rewritten to provide role play experiences that were more in line with the work life of union members. This workshop was populated by more than 30 union members and three managers, all of whom were active in the corporation's quality of worklife program, and represented an important diffusion of the race relations improvement program beyond the management organization where it had originally begun.

The advent of a new chairperson of the advisory group also became the occasion for re-examining the group's agenda of project activities. Consultants were asked to review the group's minutes and bring to the group a list of incomplete tasks. The review process also served to help the new consultants to become familiar with the group's history. After the list was brought forward, the group as a whole worked to extend and modify the items that had been identified by the consultants. After this process was complete, the group split into race-alike groups to determine a priority ordering for the full list. When the two racial groups had completed their work, a surprising result emerged: the white group had

taken the task as it had been given and returned to the total advisory group with a detailed list covering all the items. The black group, on the other hand, had determined that one issue had priority over all others, and until that problem was solved, other kinds of activities made little sense. The black group proposed that the group needed to develop a corporate policy on race relations and seek approval for it from senior management and the board of directors. After brief discussion, both black and white groups agreed that the policy statement should take first priority among all of the group's activities.

In subsequent meetings, therefore, the group devoted a major portion of its attention to preparing such a document and to planning the steps to achieve its approval. As a first step in this process, the consulting team prepared a draft of a policy statement. Then during the next advisory group meeting, black and white groups proposed revisions. A key step in this process was asking the advisory group as a whole to examine the forces in the top management group that would aid and impede their receptivity to a strong race relations policy. This process was assisted greatly by the fact that two members of the advisory group were also members of top management. Deliberations about the policy document emphasized four major elements. The corporation: (1) supports racial diversity in the workplace; (2) recognizes that racism exists in society and organizations; (3) employs and promotes people to reflect racial diversity in all units and levels in the organization; and (4) gives responsibility for acting in accord with the policy to employees and supervisors. A task force for bringing this policy to the top management group was established, and, as of this writing, they had achieved



tentative and enthusiastic approval, subject only to their setting the race relations policy into a broad framework of the corporation's personnel philosophy. This step in the race relations program, when completed, will finish a process that had remained unfulfilled since the first phase of the advisory group's life. The work of bringing the policy statement to top management, preparing the supplementary material requested by that group, and reporting back to the advisory group was carried out by a race-gender balanced task force, thereby further stabilizing that mode of carrying out advisory group work.

In fact, during this period, a variety of structural changes were made. The task force method of working was established firmly. Due to the pressures of other corporate activities, the group decided to change its meeting pattern to half days. A new constellation for planning advisory group meetings was also put into place. The senior black male, the chairperson of the group who was a white female, and the white male consultant became the planning group for advisory group meetings. The full consulting team shifted its attention exclusively to race relations competence workshops. When the black female member of the consulting team decided to leave the project, she was replaced by a black female member of the corporate organization development group, thereby setting the stage for moving conduct of the race relations workshop to internal staff.

Efforts to carry out a corporate information program about race relations, which had been begun again during the crisis, were continued in an energetic fashion. A race-gender balanced task force from the advisory group, assisted by a staff person from the corporate communications department produced a detailed 32 page plan for enlisting the variety of corporate communication vehicles to assist with the race relations

program. The report from this group received an enthusiastic reception from the advisory group. This response was in sharp contrast to the strain that had marked the effort several years earlier for a communication's department staff person to prepare a summary of the diagnostic report. In short, the group was showing increasing signs of being able to work together effectively among its own members and to relate productively to the large corporate organization.

#### Quantitative Analyses of Advisory Group Behavior and Attitudes.

Throughout the life of the advisory group we kept careful records of attendance and periodically administered a short form of the diagnostic questionnaire to the members. The attendance information was kept in the advisory group minutes, where members could see the data and correct any errors they observed. The questionnaire consisted of a series of items designed to measure perceptions of racism in the organization and a number of open-ended questions to give members an opportunity to respond to the change processes in their own terms.

Table 4 shows the proportion of members of each race-gender subgroup who attended advisory group meetings during the five years from 1980 through 1984. Generally black members had higher average attendance than white members ( $z = 2.46, p < .01$ ), and there were no significant differences between men and women in their attendance rates. Overall, the average attendance for the entire group drops in 1982 and 1983 in comparison to 1980 and 1981 ( $z = 7.34, p < .001$ ). There is an upturn in average attendance in 1984, but this change does not meet normally accepted standards of statistical significance. These behavioral patterns follow consistently with the historical development of the group.

Attendance is greatest in the early phases when the group is working most strenuously to bring itself together, falls during the second two periods when resistance from the organization to the interventions is most pronounced, and seems to rise again in the most recent period when the program seems once more to have stable backing.

Table 5 presents the intercorrelations among the seven items that comprise the perception of racism scale. The median inter-item correlation is 0.44, and the Spearman-Brown reliability estimate is .85. All items correlate at .50 or higher with the total scale. There is solid evidence that the scale is highly reliable.

Table 6 shows the means of each race-gender subgroup as a function the meeting date when the measurement was taken. The black subgroups are higher than their white counterparts in every comparison ( $p < .0001$ , sign test). To test for the effects of administration date, we performed a race by date analysis of variance with repeated measures on the race-gender subgroups, shown in Table 7. The results indicate that the change in perceptions of racism by the group as a whole was significant ( $F_{6,12} = 5.55$ ,  $p < .025$ ). In addition, the Newman Keuls procedure shown in Table 8 performed on the time series data indicated that the mean of May 1983 was lower than that of March 1982, thus suggesting a significant reduction of perceived racism during the period of crisis and realignment. Although the statistical tests are not powerful enough to substantiate the trend, the pattern of subgroup changes shown in Figure 1 clearly suggests that the overall increase in perceived racism stems from changes by the white subgroup -- perhaps especially among the white women. At every comparison the white women perceived more racism than white men ( $p < .0001$ , sign test).

The open-ended section of the advisory group questionnaire consisted of three questions:

1. Based on what you now understand about race relations in corporate management, what issues have the most personal impact on your work life?
2. In your opinion, what would be the most effective thing that corporate management could do to improve race relations in management?
3. In your opinion, what would be the worst thing that corporate management could do to improve race relations in management?

Content coding systems were developed for question 1 and for questions 2 and 3.

Responses to question 1 were scored according to three levels of analysis: (1) level of attention, (2) direction of movement, and (3) subject of learning. The reliability of coding responses to question 1, measured by B as recommended by Dollard and Auld (1956), was .51  $p < .02$ , .52  $p < .002$ , and .38  $p < .05$ , respectively, based on black and white coders working independently.

Table 9 shows the distributions of responses by level of attention from black and white members of the advisory group across the seven administrations of the questionnaire. The distributions of responses among the categories are significantly different for blacks and whites ( $\chi^2 = 13.64$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $p < .05$ ). White members reported more learning about themselves as individuals, while black members give more responses about themselves and their own racial group. Blacks more than whites also indicated that their understanding increased with respect to the white group and with respect to various corporate groups, most of whom had white dominance. Table 10 shows the distributions of responses by direction of movement.

For this category there are no differences between black and white response distributions; both groups report their greatest learning on the matter of resistance to change. Table 11 shows the distributions of responses by subject of learning. This category has different distributions of responses for blacks and whites ( $\chi^2 = 17.91$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Blacks report learning more about promotions and evaluations and about the effects of organization norms and culture, while whites say they learn more about racism and about knowledge and skill in race relations.

Responses to questions 2 and 3 were scored according to inductively derived categories. The reliability of these categories, measured by Tau B, was .56,  $p < .001$ , based upon black and white coders working independently. (Note: To convert Tau B into a scale comparable to the product moment correlation, take the square root.) Table 12 shows the distribution of responses to question 2 in terms of the most frequently used categories. There are no statistically significant differences between the racial groups. Table 13 shows the distribution of responses to question 3 in terms of the most frequently used categories. Blacks show a clear tendency to believe more than whites that worst thing the corporation might do to improve race relations would be to do nothing or to take superficial actions.

Finally, table 14 shows how members of the advisory group were distributed throughout the corporate hierarchy during each year of the project. White members representing each level are present each year. Black members represent levels I to IV from 1980 to 1983 and, in 1984, add a person to level V. To provide a rough estimate of the hierarchical position of blacks and whites on the group, we compute the average level for both racial groups for each year. Both groups show slight increases

over the duration of the project. Among group members, one black man, three black women, one white man, and one white woman were promoted while they served on the group. Other changes in the distribution occur because levels differed between people who left the group and others who replaced them.

#### Overview of Developmental Processes

As a microcosm of corporate management designed to change race relations, the advisory group demonstrated dialectical conflict and parallel processes throughout its history. Splitting the group into race and gender alike subgroups was a structural mechanism that permitted different perceptions and preferences to emerge as these were useful for the tasks of the group. Changes of behavior within group reflected changes in the larger organizations.

The attitude measures taken periodically through the life of the group indicated that black members consistently saw more racism in the organization than white members. Evidence for change during the first two phases of the group's history indicated that white women and men showed an increase in the degree of racism they perceived. Taking the data at face value, one might conclude that this change indicated an improvement in race relations in the organization. Yet, a fuller examination of events at the time gives a more complex interpretation. At the time in question, members of the advisory group were raising questions about the future of the project, the person to be chair of the group was in doubt, leadership of the personnel department was changing, the upward mobility program was facing severe resistance from the organization, and members of the advisory group were

learning about the presence of a white supremacist group in the organization. These conditions indicated that major forces for change through the upward mobility program and the race relations competence workshop were facing significant resistance. Thus, the decrease in racism noted for all four subgroups is more accurately interpreted as a balance of favorable change combined with significant resistance. Pressures from the organization were pushing race relations more toward the predominantly white as well as toward a dialectical view during the third phase of the group's life; parallel processes were flowing strongly from the organization to the advisory group as well as vice versa. This manner of interpretation makes use of the full range of information available to the researcher, not just the questionnaire data.

From the historical material, there was evidence of a complex relationship among the internal dynamics of the advisory group, the tasks the group was carrying out, and the external relations of the group. In its first phase, the group had a clear mandate from the organization to advise about the corporation's race relations improvement program. To become an effective group, the members had to establish their own agreements about the meaning of improved race relations. During this period, there was considerable strain among black and white members; consultants and group; and chairperson and group. A similar pattern was observed when staff from corporate communications worked with the group. By the end of this period, however, the group had established its way of working, and after helping create three important products (the race relations competence document, the race relations workshop, and the upward mobility program) it was poised to observe the effects of these efforts. During this period, the advisory

group initially absorbed the racial conditions of the organization, transformed them through their own internal work, and then attempted to project them outward into the corporation.

In the middle phases, the group dealt with the organization's response to the interventions. During the second phase the group provided feedback to the chairperson, the consultants, the Black Managers Association, and the Board of Directors about how the various projects were unfolding. As their products moved outward into the organization, the role of the group became more passive and inevitably less creative. Attendance dropped; meetings were cancelled; some members left the group; and attention turned to the joint tasks of self assessment and project review. The third phase found the organization's processes once again affecting the group and the intervention program as corporate changes in mission and leadership intersected with resistance to the intervention program to produce a major crisis. In this period, the group served as a major stabilizing force by serving as a living source of program history. The questions that members raised with the new leadership provided a major corrective stimulus and helped to improve conditions under which the intervention continued. While the efforts of several key individuals were most important during this phase, the group provided another order of support without which it seems unlikely the program would have survived. The third phase was a time of the group's parallel processes projecting outward in a relatively narrow and precise manner to the new leadership of the personnel department. The working through of authority issues that had initially been done inside the group among members, chairperson, and consultants was carried outside the project to include several senior members of corporate management.



In the fourth phase, with the group again confident of its place in the corporation, new programmatic initiatives were observed. The mode of working in cross-race-cross-gender task forces was well established. Projects to establish a strong corporate policy on race relations and to undertake a communications program about race relations were successfully pursued. Movements to place more responsibility for the program with organization members and less with consultants were begun. The group was again in a position of projecting its style of race relations outward to the whole organization, while relating receptively to the differences in perspective and preference represented by the larger system.

In sum, the five year history of the race relations advisory group provides evidence for developmental phases in the life of the unit. Observations about the group pertain to internal dynamics, tasks, and external relations (Gersick, 1983). Key transition events involve negotiations with authorities who have relationship with the group -- the chairperson, the consultants, leadership of the personnel department, top management, and the board of directors. Each of these transactions, when they proceeded fruitfully, marked progressive movement in the group's effect on race relations in the corporation. Setbacks in successive stages also were evident and substantiated the concept of change as a cyclical, dialectical process. We now have an empirical basis for adding a temporal dimension to the intergroup theory of changing race relations in organizations and for relating phases in the change processes to how groups are embedded in suprasystems.

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TABLE 1.

Phases in the Life of the Race Relations Advisory Group

<u>Phase</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Internal Dynamics</u>	<u>Products and Processes</u>	<u>External Relations</u>
1. Start Up	May 1980 to May 1981	Roles & Responsibilities Black-white tension in committee Committee-chairperson negotiations Committee-consultant differences	Mission Statement Diagnosis Summary Concept of Race Relations Competence Upward Mobility Program Design	Size of group expands; members commit and recommit White and black PR writers work with group BMA writes to group Delegation to Board of Directors Committee
2. Major Intervention	September 1981 to December 1982	Group criticizes workshop Members leave Meetings canceled Review accomplishments	Workshop Designed and Implemented Upward Mobility Program Undertaken	Black male consultant joins management New members join Reactions to Workshop and Upward Mobility Program are prominent
3. Crisis and Realignment	January 1983 to December 1983	Examine benefits and costs of membership Chairperson changes Task force model of work considered	Reports on Workshop and Upward Mobility History of Group Reviewed Internal Complaint Review	Change in Personnel Department leadership Consultant team changes membership Inquiry to antiblack group Corporate mission changes
4. Stabilization.	March 1984 onward	Chairperson changes again Task force structure implemented Meetings shortened	Corporate Policy Formulated Information Program Planned	Presentation to top management Corporate Communications staff assistance QWL cooperation Consultants reduce number

TABLE 2.

Excerpts from the Race Relations Competence Document

Blacks Supervising Whites

I. Understandings

- A.1. In order to survive and advance in the business, blacks must understand the norms of the white setting in which they work. Blacks should anticipate that they will be compared to white role models, and must anticipate the difficulty they will have when their behavior does not conform with white expectations...
- B.1. White subordinates may be devalued by others or feel resentment themselves because they have a black supervisor. Thus, black managers may feel embarrassment and a loss of self-esteem, which may tempt them to react inappropriately....
- D.2. Black managers must clearly understand and accept their own black identity in order to appreciate and appropriately deal with how whites respond to them.

II. Behaviors

- A.4. Black managers should also extend themselves to understand the feelings of white subordinates and to assure them that their legitimate concerns are considered...
- B.5. Black managers should establish alliances inside and outside the immediate work group with whites as well as blacks. These alliances can counter negative characterizations which dissatisfied or prejudiced whites may attempt to spread and can help to develop the support to advance both white and black subordinates...

Whites Supervising Whites

I. Understandings

- A.1. Many white managers and their subordinates may be disinterested or opposed to efforts to improve race relations....
- A.4. When a white manager acts as an advocate for black managers, or takes positive action to improve race relations, other whites may accuse her or him of being too liberal...

II. Behaviors

- A.2. White managers should not condone behavior by whites that undermines effective race relations. They must actively discourage racial joking, racist remarks, and other actions that generate non-productive racial tensions....
- A.4. White managers should initiate open discussion of race relations rather than ignore issues and permit them to smolder underground...

TABLE 3.

Tabulation of Benefits and Costs of Advisory Group Membershipby Race Gender Subgroups

January 1983

	Benefits	Costs
Black Men	9	6
Black Women	12	10
White Men	8	10
White Women	11	5

TABLE 4.

Race Relations Advisory Group Attendance Patterns:Proportion of Members Present by Yearand Race Gender Subgroup

Year	Number of Meetings	Black Men	Black Women	White Men	White Women	Annual Mean	
1980	7	.83	.94	.89	.86	.88	
1981	8	.94	.91	.94	.74	.88	
1982	2	.80	1.00	.60	.70	.78	
1983	5	.76	.80	.64	.64	.71	
1984	5	.68	.92	.74	.68	.76	
Subgroup Means	5.4	.80	.91	.76	.72	.80	GRAND MEAN
	Black Mean	.86		Male Mean	.78		
	White Mean	.74		Female Mean	.82		

TABLE 5.

Perception of Racism Scale: Single Items and Total Scale Correlations

(n = 111)

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7
1. Most managers at XYZ are biased against Blacks.	1.0						
2. Blacks expect (reverse scored)	-.14	1.0					
3. Whites are given greater promotional opportunities than Blacks.	.31	-.43	1.0				
4. Whites cannot deal with competent Blacks.	.31	-.43	.49	1.0			
5. XYZ has already done too much on Black-White issues. (reverse scored)	-.43	.31	-.45	-.44	1.0		
6. Race Relations within XYZ are good. (reverse scored)	-.26	.23	-.44	-.44	.28	1.0	
7. Blacks are almost never evaluated fairly by White supervisors.	.36	-.49	.70	.66	-.52	-.48	1.0
TOTAL SCALE	-.50	.61	-.78	-.79	.65	.64	-.87

TABLE 6.

Race Relations Advisory Group Perceptions of Racism: Race-Gender SubgroupMeans, Standard Deviations, and Sample Size by Date ofQuestionnaire Administration

Date	Black Men	Black Women	White Men	White Women	Meeting Means	
1. May 1980	$\bar{X}=5.0$ $S=.37$ $n=5$	$\bar{X}=5.0$ $S=.82$ $n=3$	$\bar{X}=3.5$ $S=.65$ $n=5$	$\bar{X}=3.9$ $S=.87$ $n=5$	4.3	
2. July 1980	$\bar{X}=5.1$ $S=.54$ $n=4$	$\bar{X}=4.9$ $S=.65$ $n=5$	$\bar{X}=3.7$ $S=.64$ $n=5$	$\bar{X}=4.0$ $S=.69$ $n=4$	4.4	
3. November 1980	$\bar{X}=5.1$ $S=.46$ $n=5$	$\bar{X}=5.0$ $S=.48$ $n=5$	$\bar{X}=4.0$ $S=.71$ $n=5$	$\bar{X}=4.2$ $S=.49$ $n=5$	4.6	
4. February 1981	$\bar{X}=5.3$ $S=.33$ $n=4$	$\bar{X}=5.0$ $S=.50$ $n=3$	$\bar{X}=4.1$ $S=.91$ $n=2$	$\bar{X}=4.4$ $S=.38$ $n=4$	4.7	
5. May 1981	$\bar{X}=5.1$ $S=.44$ $n=4$	$\bar{X}=5.2$ $S=.14$ $n=4$	$\bar{X}=4.0$ $S=1.03$ $n=4$	$\bar{X}=4.8$ $S=.49$ $n=4$	4.8	
6. March 1982	$\bar{X}=5.2$ $S=.36$ $n=4$	$\bar{X}=5.3$ $S=.53$ $n=4$	$\bar{X}=4.6$ $S=1.06$ $n=4$	$\bar{X}=4.9$ $S=.91$ $n=2$	5.0	
7. May 1983	$\bar{X}=4.9$ $S=.30$ $n=3$	$\bar{X}=5.1$ $S=.62$ $n=3$	$\bar{X}=3.4$ $S=0$ $n=1$	$\bar{X}=4.5$ $S=.30$ $n=2$	4.5	
Subgroup Means	5.1	5.1	3.9	4.4	4.6	GRAND MEAN
	Black Mean	5.1	Male Mean	4.5		
	White Mean	4.1	Female Mean	4.7		



TABLE 7.

Two Way Analysis of Variance with Repeated Measures  
of Perceived Racism by Race-Gender Subgroups

	df	MS	F	p
<u>Between subgroups</u>				
Race	1	6.22	14.80	<.10
Subgroups within groups	2	.42		
<u>Within subgroups</u>				
Date	6	.20	5.55	<.025
Race X Date	6	.07	1.94	n.s.
Date X Subgroups within groups	12	.036		

TABLE 8.

Tests on Meeting Date Means of Perceived Racism Using Newman Keuls Procedure

Dates	May 1980 $t_1$	July 1980 $t_2$	May 1983 $t_7$	Nov. 1980 $t_3$	Feb. 1981 $t_4$	May 1981 $t_5$	March 1982 $t_6$
Ordered means	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	5.0
$t_1$	-	.1*	.2*	.3*	.4*	.5*	.7*
$t_2$		-	.2*	.2*	.3*	.4*	.6*
$t_7$			-	.1(ns)	.2*	.3*	.5*
$t_4$				-	.1(ns)	.2*	.4*
$t_5$					-	.1(ns)	.3*
$t_6$						-	.2*
$r$		2	3	4	5	6	7
$q_{.95}(r, 12)$		3.09	3.27	4.20	4.51	4.75	4.95
$s_{date}[q_{.95}(r, 12)]$		.07	.09	.10	.11	.11	.12

\*  $p < .05$

FIGURE 1.

Race Relations Advisory Group Perceptions of Racism:

Race-Gender Subgroups Means by Date of Questionnaire Administration

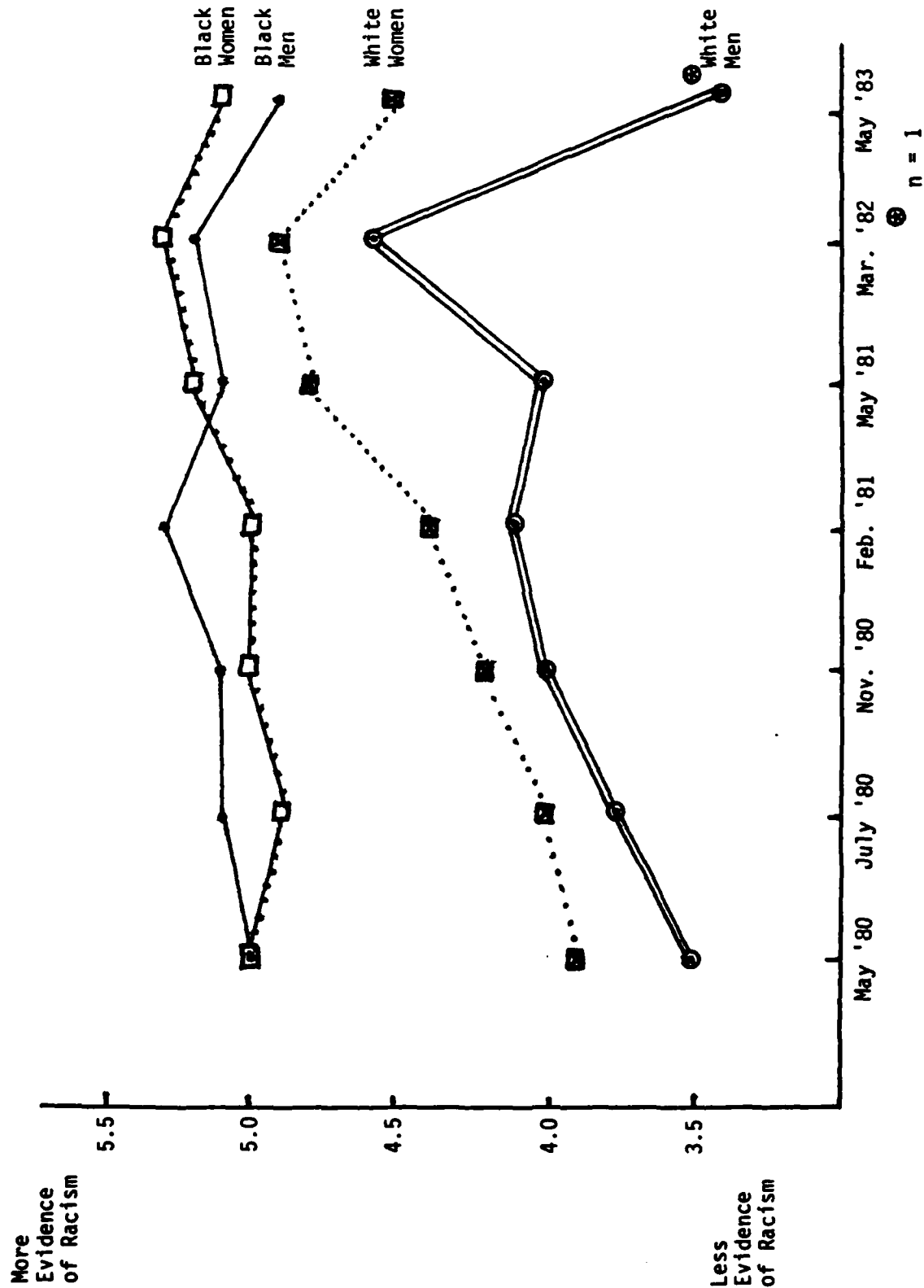


TABLE 9.

Distribution of Responses by  
Unit of Attention for Issues that Have Most Personal Impact on Work Life

	Blacks	Whites
Self as individual	6	12
Own racial group	5	4
Self and own racial group	4	1
Other racial group	14	7
Relationship of racial groups	6	1
Corporate organization groups	8	5
None of the above	11	21

TABLE 10.

Distribution of Responses by  
Direction of Movement for Issues that have Most Personal Impact on Work Life

	Blacks	Whites
Resistance to change	28	22
Progressive movement	9	10
Dialectic movement	5	8
No sense of change	12	11

TABLE 11.

Distribution of Responses by  
Subject of Learning for Issues that Have Most Personal  
Impact on Work Life

	Blacks	Whites
Evaluations and promotions	26	11
Organization norms and culture	9	2
Knowledge and skill in race relations	10	14
Racism	3	8
Other	6	16

TABLE 12.

Distribution of Responses to Most Effective  
Corporate Action to Improve Race Relations

	Blacks	Whites
Place blacks in all departments and levels	12	5
Start new programs on race relations	10	12
Discipline managers who commit racist actions	5	2
Mandate improved race relations	7	6
Continue current programs to improve race relations	7	5
Speed-up current efforts to improve race relations	5	2
Other	11	17

TABLE 13.

Distribution of Responses to Worst Corporate Actions  
to Improve Race Relations

	Blacks	Whites
Do nothing or carry out superficial efforts	40	19
Other	18	33



TABLE 14.

Advisory Group Membership by Hierarchical Level  
as a Function of Time

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>
Black Level I	4	4	4	5	2
II	3	3	2	1	3
III	2	1	3	1	2
IV	1	1	2	3	3
V	0	0	0	0	1
VI	0	0	0	0	0
Mean Black Level	2.0	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.4
White Level I	3	3	2	2	1
II	2	2	2	3	3
III	2	2	1	1	2
IV	1	1	2	2	2
V	1*	1*	1*	1*	1
VI	2	2	2	2	2*
Mean White Level	3.1	3.1	3.4	3.3	3.4
Mean Total Level	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.9	2.9

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Millington, TN 38D54

Navy Recruiting Command  
Head, Research and Analysis Branch  
Code 434, Room 8001  
801 North Randolph Street  
Arlington, VA 22203

Navy Recruiting Command  
Director, Recruiting Advertising Dept.  
Code 40  
801 North Randolph Street  
Arlington, VA 22203

Naval Weapons Center  
Code 094  
China Lake, CA 93555

Jesse Orlansky  
Institute for Defense Analyses  
1801 North Beauregard Street  
Alexandria, VA 22311

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LIST 9  
USMC

Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps  
Code MPI-20  
Washington, DC 20380

Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps  
ATTN: Scientific Adviser,  
Code RD-1  
Washington, DC 20380

Education Advisor  
Education Center (E031)  
MCDEC  
Quantico, VA 22134

Commanding Officer  
Education Center (E031)  
MCDEC  
Quantico, VA 22134

Commanding Officer  
U.S. Marine Corps  
Command and Staff College  
Quantico, VA 22134

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LIST 10  
OTHER FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Defense Advanced Research  
Projects Agency  
Director, Cybernetics  
Technology Office  
1400 Wilson Blvd, Rm 625  
Arlington, VA 22209

Dr. Douglas Hunter  
Defense Intelligence School  
Washington, DC 20374

Dr. Brian Usilaner  
GAO  
Washington, DC 20548

National Institute of Education  
EOLC/SMO  
1200 19th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20208

National Institute of Mental Health  
Division of Extramural Research Programs  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20852

National Institute of Mental Health  
Minority Group Mental Health Programs  
Room 7 - 102  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20852

Office of Personnel Management  
Office of Planning and Evaluation  
Research Management Division  
1900 E Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20415

Chief, Psychological Research Branch  
U.S. Coast Guard (G-P-1/2/TP42)  
Washington, D.C. 20593

Social and Developmental Psychology  
Program  
National Science Foundation  
Washington, D.C. 20550

Dr. Earl Potter  
U.S. Coast Guard Academy  
New London, CT 06320

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LIST 10 CONT'D

OTHER FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Division of Industrial Science  
& Technological Innovation  
Productivity Improvement Research  
National Science Foundation  
Washington, D.C. 20550

Douglas B. Blackburn, Director  
National Defense University  
Mobilization Concepts Development  
Center  
Washington, D.C. 20319

Chairman, Dept. of Medical Psychology  
School of Medicine  
Uniformed Services University of  
the Health Sciences  
4301 Jones Bridge Road  
Bethesda, MD 20814

LIST 11  
ARMY

Headquarters, FORSCOM  
ATTN: AFPR-HR  
Ft. McPherson, GA 30330

Army Research Institute  
Field Unit - Leavenworth  
P.O. Box 3122  
Fort Leavenworth, ~~KS~~ 66027

Technical Director  
Army Research Institute  
5001 Eisenhower Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22333

(3 copies)

Head, Department of Behavior  
Science and Leadership  
U.S. Military Academy, New York 10996

Walter Reed Army Medical Center  
W. R. Army Institute of Research  
Division of Neuropsychiatry  
Forest Glen  
Washington, D.C. 20012

Army Military Personnel Command  
Attn: DAPC-OE  
200 Stovall Street  
Alexandria, VA 22322

Research Psychologist  
Selection and Classification Performance  
Measurement Team  
Army Research Institute  
Attention: PERI-RS  
5001 Eisenhower Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22333

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LIST 12  
AIR FORCE

Air University Library  
LSE 76-443  
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112

Head, Department of Behavioral  
Science and Leadership  
U.S. Air Force Academy, CO 80840

MAJ Robert Gregory  
USAFA/DFBL  
U.S. Air Force Academy, CO 80840

AFOSR/NL  
Building 410  
Bolling AFB  
Washington, DC 20332

Department of the Air Force  
HQUSAF/MPXHL  
Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20330

Technical Director  
AFHRL/MO(T)  
Brooks AFB  
San Antonio, TX 78235

AFMPC/MPCYPR  
Randolph AFB, TX 78150

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LIST 13  
MISCELLANEOUS

Australian Embassy  
Office of the Air Attache (S3B)  
1601 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036

British Embassy  
Scientific Information Officer  
Room 509  
3100 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20008

Canadian Defense Liaison Staff,  
Washington  
ATTN: CDRD  
2450 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20008

Commandant, Royal Military  
College of Canada  
ATTN: Department of Military  
Leadership and Management  
Kingston, Ontario K7L 2W3

National Defence Headquarters  
DPAF  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K2

Mr. Luigi Petrullo  
2431 North Edgewood Street  
Arlington, VA 22207



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Sequential by Principal Investigator

LIST 14  
CURRENT CONTRACTORS

Dr. Clayton P. Alderfer  
Yale University  
School of Organization and Management  
New Haven, Connecticut 06520

Dr. Janet L. Barnes-Farrell  
Department of Psychology  
University of Hawaii  
2430 Campus Road  
Honolulu, HI 96822

Dr. Jomills Braddock  
John Hopkins University  
Center for the Social Organization  
of Schools  
3505 N. Charles Street  
Baltimore, MD 21218

Dr. Jeanne M. Brett  
Northwestern University  
Graduate School of Management  
2001 Sheridan Road  
Evanston, IL 60201

Dr. Terry Connolly  
University of Arizona  
Department of Psychology, Rm. 312  
Tucson, AZ 85721

Dr. Richard Daft  
Texas A&M University  
Department of Management  
College Station, TX 77843

Dr. Randy Dunham  
University of Wisconsin  
Graduate School of Business  
Madison, WI 53706

List 14 (continued)

Dr. Henry Emurian  
The Johns Hopkins University  
School of Medicine  
Department of Psychiatry and  
Behavioral Science  
Baltimore, MD 21205

Dr. Arthur Gerstenfeld  
University Faculty Associates  
710 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton, MA 02159

Dr. J. Richard Rackman  
School of Organization  
and Management  
Box 1A, Yale University  
New Haven, CT 06520

Dr. Wayne Holder  
American Humane Association  
P.O. Box 1266  
Denver, CO 80201

Dr. Daniel Ilgen  
Department of Psychology  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48824

Dr. Lawrence R. James  
School of Psychology  
Georgia Institute of  
Technology  
Atlanta, GA 30332

Dr. David Johnson  
Professor, Educational Psychology  
178 Pillsbury Drive, S.E.  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, MN 55455

List 14 (continued)

Dr. Dan Landis  
The University of Mississippi  
College of Liberal Arts  
University, MS 38677

Dr. Frank J. Landy  
The Pennsylvania State University  
Department of Psychology  
417 Bruce V. Moore Building  
University Park, PA 16802

Dr. Bibb Latane  
The University of North Carolina  
at Chapel Hill  
Manning Hall 026A  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Dr. Cynthia D. Fisher  
College of Business Administration  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, TX 77843

Dr. Lynn Oppenheim  
Wharton Applied Research Center  
University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dr. Thomas M. Ostrom  
The Ohio State University  
Department of Psychology  
116E Stadium  
404C West 17th Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43210

Dr. William G. Ouchi  
University of California,  
Los Angeles  
Graduate School of Management  
Los Angeles, CA 90024

List 14 (continued)

Dr. Robert Rice  
State University of New York at Buffalo  
Department of Psychology  
Buffalo, NY 14226

Dr. Irwin G. Sarason  
University of Washington  
Department of Psychology, NI-25  
Seattle, WA 98195

Dr. Benjamin Schneider  
Department of Psychology  
University of Maryland  
College Park, MD 20742

Dr. Edgar H. Schein  
Massachusetts Institute of  
Technology  
Sloan School of Management  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dr. H. Wallace Sinaiko  
Program Director, Manpower Research  
and Advisory Services  
Smithsonian Institution  
801 N. Pitt Street, Suite 120  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dr. Eliot Smith  
Psychology Department  
Purdue University  
West Lafayette, IN 47907

Dr. Richard M. Steers  
Graduate School of Management  
University of Oregon  
Eugene, OR 97403

Dr. Barbara Saboda  
Public Applied Systems Division  
Westinghouse Electric Corporation  
P.O. Box 866  
Columbia, MD 21044

List 14 (continued)

Dr. Harry C. Triandis  
Department of Psychology  
University of Illinois  
Champaign, IL 61820

Dr. Anne S. Tsui  
Duke University  
The Fuqua School of Business  
Durham, NC 27706

Dr. Andrew H. Van de Ven  
University of Minnesota  
Office of Research Administration  
1919 University Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55104

Dr. Philip Wexler  
University of Rochester  
Graduate School of Education &  
Human Development  
Rochester, NY 14627

Dr. Sabra Woolley  
SRA Corporation  
901 South Highland Street  
Arlington, VA 22204

**END**

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